

City Sleuth Citation

Annual awards on the landscape and cityscape

THE BOSTON INFORMER

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Motor Mart Garage Renovation



The 1927-era, 897-space Motor Mart Garage, Boston's first major parking garage which once accommodated 2,000 cars, is undergoing complete renovation. Located in Park Square, the Motor Mart Garage was designed by Ralph Harrington Doane and won the Boston Society of Architect's award for that year's most beautiful building. The garage was at the forefront of trends to consolidate automobile services under one roof, with seven levels of parking and ground floor retail. The renovation will restore the historic façade, including the decorative features with winged medallions made to look like flying hubcaps, and will renovate and upgrade the first-floor and basement retail spaces. The large, historic vertical "garage" sign will also be restored. Structural improvements to the internal ramps and the addition of 124 parking spaces on the roof—not visible from the street—are also part of the renovation. The project, led by Bergmeyer Associates, architects, is expected to be complete in spring 1999.

Source: Bergmeyer Associates, Inc.

Big Dig Financial Questions—

Additional borrowing by authorities to cover the state's share of Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project costs is inevitable, a recent summary issued by the Mass. Turnpike Authority reports. Construction of the CA/T project is about 41 percent complete, with \$6.2 billion spent to date and about \$5.5 billion needed to complete the project by 2005. Despite the majority of the total \$11.7 billion project cost coming from the federal government, and 82 percent of project costs to date, federal participation in the project is expected to decline to about 49 percent through completion. The state will be responsible for paying for \$4.8 billion.

Huge borrowing by the state, the Mass. Turnpike Authority and Massport will be necessary for the state to cover its share of the CA/T costs. The report identifies the funding sources: bonds and notes issued by the state (\$1.6 billion), bonds issued by the Mass. Turnpike Authority (\$1.4 billion), Massport bonds (\$300 million) and Grant Anticipation Notes (GANS) issued by the state (\$1.5 billion).

GANS are notes issued by the state to be paid off by using 50 percent of Federal Highway Administration funds allocated to Massachusetts for all highway-related work after the CA/T project is completed in 2005. Officials stated that the goal is to pay off the GANS by 2015.

Call the Environmental Oversight Committee, 451-2770, for copies of the summary report.

Mass transit commitments in Central/Artery project disputed—

As condition for approval of the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project in 1991, the project agreed to expand public transportation to provide traffic relief during and after construction. Little or no progress on these commitments has pushed the Commonwealth's Attorney General and the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) to file lawsuits against the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC) and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD). The lawsuits claim four of the commitments have not been kept:

- purchase of 400 new MBTA buses by 1993
- permanent replacement transit service on Washington Street in the South End and Roxbury by 1995
- buy 46 new Orange Line cars by 1996
- extension of the Blue Line platforms to accommodate six-car trains by 1998.

In addition, CLF contends that the CA/T project is in default by not connecting the Blue and Red lines and by not having a permanent Arborway service. Others have said that the CA/T project's failure to promote public transit options, focusing instead on maintaining the existing traffic flow, is proof that the project has no intention of paying for improved and expanded transit services as originally expected.

While perhaps not a legal commitment, the original CA/T environmental impact statement also called for the new Ted Williams Tunnel to be fully connected to the Mass Turnpike (I-90) and open to all traffic before major construction on depressing the Central Artery began, thereby diverting 90,000–100,000 vehicles per day from the mainline Artery.

People Movers

Robin Ellis, from chief of environmental management at Massport, to corporate director of environmental health and safety, Ionics, Inc.
Trudy Coxe, from Massachusetts secretary of Environmental Affairs, to head of the Preservation Society of Newport, Rhode Island.
Lorraine Downey, from director of the City of Boston Environment Department, to other ventures.
Diane J. Modica, former District 1 City Councilor, has opened a law office specializing in client representation before administrative boards and commissions.
Anne McKinnon, from Howard/Stein-Hudson, to ICON architecture, inc.
Mike Carragher, from LS Transit Systems, to Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB).
Jim Nolan, MBTA Operations, has retired.
David Passafaro, from chief of staff for Boston Mayor Menino, to Boston Concessions, a Cambridge real estate development company.
John Eade, from Boston commissioner of Inspectional Services, to reading books, catching up on movies, and other ventures.
Andrea D'Amato was appointed Boston commissioner of Transportation after serve as acting commissioner since the spring. She is also cabinet chief of environmental affairs.
Michael Dukakis, Northeastern University professor, has been named a vice chairman of Amtrak.
John J. Kennedy, VHB principal, received a Move Mass. 2000 award for his role facilitating vehicular & pedestrian traffic during CA/T construction.
R. J. Lyman, from head of Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Unit (MEPA), to Goodwin Procter & Hoar.
Jay Wickersham, from Hill & Barlow, to head of MEPA.

1 Children's Museum Facelift...The Children's Museum on the Fort Point Channel plans to upgrade its surroundings as part of a \$10-\$12 million project. The project will be undertaken in phases as money is raised.

The first phase will be reconstruction of the boardwalk and sea wall in front of the parking lot and museum building. Other phases will include a "water garden" with fountains and pools, a number of outdoor exhibits and the creation of a rowing basin by linking barges in the Fort Point Channel. The highly touted addition to the museum designed by architect Frank Gehry has been shelved. Museum attendance is currently over 300,000 per year.

Wanted!

Jane Holtz Kay, author of *Lost Boston* and *Asphalt Nation*, is looking for photos for a portfolio to add to a new edition of *Lost Boston* for its 20th anniversary. If you have photos of "lost" buildings, places, streetscapes, parks, greenswards, railroad stations, industrial artifacts, storefronts, etc., in the circle of the city, write (156 Milk St., Boston 02109); e-mail (jholtzkay@aol.com); or fax: (617) 451-6475.

2 Massport is negotiating with **Delta Air Lines** to have the airline demolish Terminal A (Former Eastern Airlines terminal) at Logan Airport and rebuild a new one at an estimated cost of \$350 million.

Unlike the current Terminal A, the new building would be connected to the other terminals and would be to handle wide-bodied planes. Delta operations are now split between two terminals. Agreement is expected in the next few months, and it could be three or four years before the terminal is built because of the extensive permitting required.

Separately, Massport plans to spend \$300 million of its own money to renovate international Terminal E, including a second level roadway for departures.

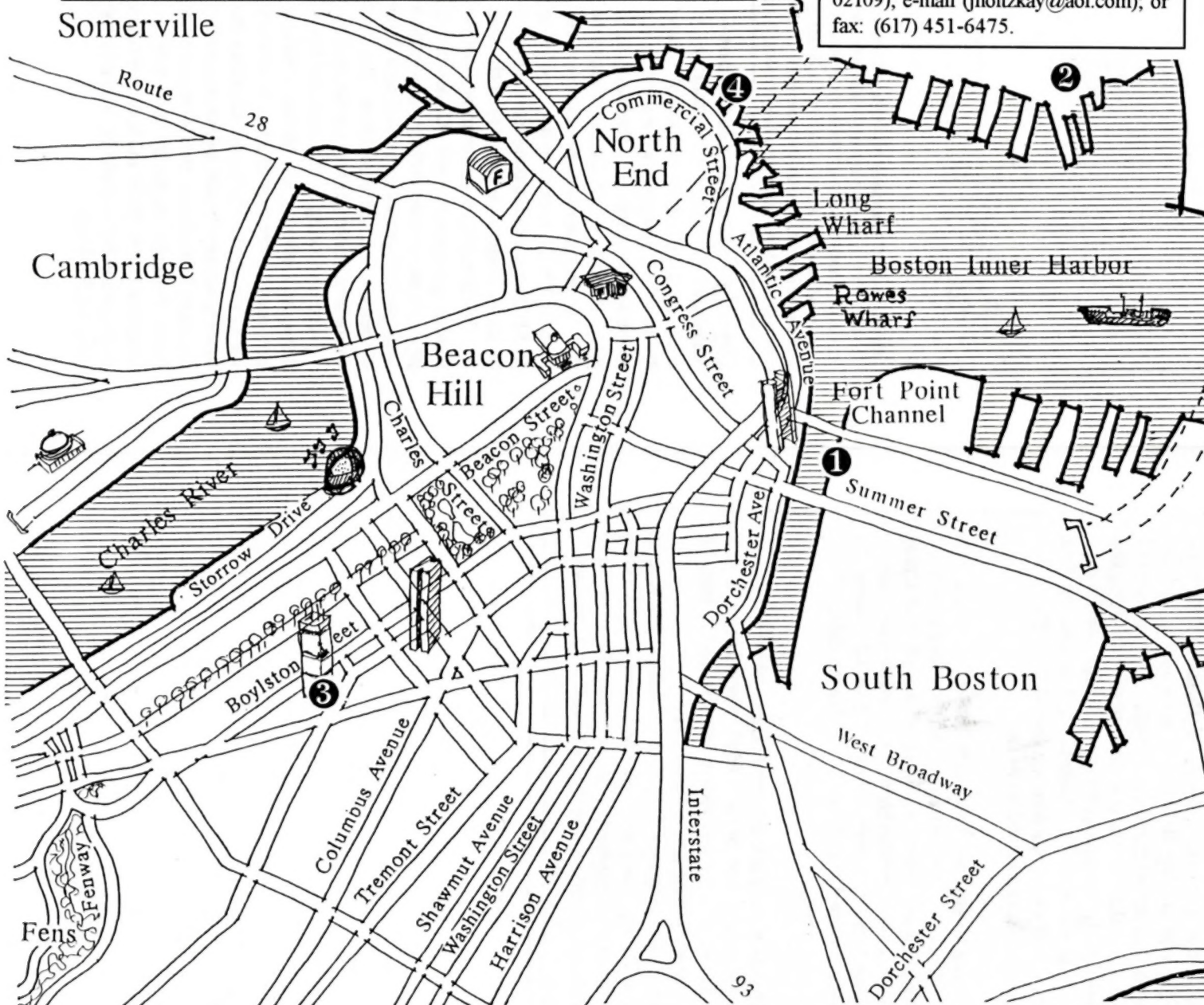
3 The Prudential Center expansion and renovation plans are back on. As part of the overall plan for a 15-year redevelopment project for the 25-acre Prudential Center, work on the Huntington Avenue side of the complex is one of the first of several components to be planned, designed, reviewed and built.

On Huntington Avenue, the master plan calls for a 36-story, 850,000 s.f. office building, a 130,000 s.f. residential building, 60,000 s.f. of additional retail space and a pedestrian entrance and circulation system for the complex that will complement the existing system. In addition, the below-grade parking will be renovated and expanded as part of the office and retail projects. The two-year construction period is expected to start in spring 1999.

4 Responding to community concerns, the Raymond Property Co., developer of **Battery Wharf** on Commercial Street in the North End, has eliminated the proposed 40,000 s.f. supermarket, redesigned the center plaza and entrance to the parking garage and opened up views of the harbor from the land side. The building height has been reduced to 55 feet from 75 feet.

One building on Commercial Street will house two floors of retail and three floors of condominiums. The other Commercial Street building will have one floor of retail and four condominium floors. Three floors of condominiums above three hotel floors are planned for the two wharf buildings, for a total of 198 hotel rooms and 120 condominiums. Underground parking for 376 will be provided.

Two years of construction is expected to start in January. Architect: CBT.



South Boston Seaport District Update—The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) hired Cooper, Robertson and Partners, New York consulting architects, to help put together a master plan for the South Boston Seaport District. The \$85,000 contract, to be completed by December 1998, will draft a synthesis of previous plans.

Meanwhile, the Pritzker family, the owners of the Hyatt Hotel enterprise, has hired Spaulding & Slye, a Boston real estate firm, to help design and secure permits for an \$800 million waterfront hotel, office and condominium project on its 21-acre site next to the new federal courthouse. The Pritzkers also hired Urban Strategies Inc., from Toronto to assist with the planning. The goal is to complete the project by 2002, with the 800-room Hyatt Regency open in time for the opening of the new Convention Center, scheduled for 2003.

Separately, Stephen Karp of New England Development reportedly has an option to buy Pier 4 from restaurateur Anthony Athanas. Karp's plans may include a hotel, condominiums, retail and possibly office space, apparently on a "modest" scale. Athanas could be given a new restaurant elsewhere on the pier.

Charles/MGH station ideas competition—Winners of the joint MBTA/Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) ideas competition for the redesign of the Red Line Charles/MGH station were announced recently. The six-member jury of architects and landscape architects chose five awards from 133 entries for first place, six honorable mentions, and five citations. The prize money totaled \$30,000.

A sampling of the ideas submitted to transform Charles Circle and the MBTA station, improve pedestrian circulation and create a gateway to the community includes: an elevated promenade that would recreate Charles Circle; new ground-level entrance at West Cedar Street; a new, elevated platform with changing media displays; new pedestrian bridges, walkways and connections; and more. Winners and other notable entries will be displayed in a public location in the coming weeks, starting with the annual Boston Society of Architects' Build Boston convention at the World Trade Center, Nov. 17-19.

Charles/MGH station, built as a WPA project in 1932, is hostile to all pedestrians, particularly the infirm headed to MGH. The MBTA has been pressured for years to improve the station and now says it will begin to move forward on the design of a new station. MGH has committed \$2 million for the effort.

Plans are on hold to convert the former Rapids Furniture warehouse on **Tudor Wharf in City Square** in Charlestown to a 183-room hotel. The Summerfield Hotel Corporation had recently filed environmental documents for the hotel, restaurant, and two meeting rooms.

The prominent site, off Water Street and adjacent to Constitution Marina and North Washington Street Bridge, was the scene of a suspicious fire in which a firefighter died and the pier was destroyed. The 135,000 s.f. facility would replace the Rapids Furniture building, 75 feet high on the Water Street side and 55 feet high within 100 feet of the water's edge. No parking at the hotel was proposed, but parking for 148 cars would have been provided off-site.

The community objected to the design and to the off-site parking, and addressing its concerns could significantly increase project costs. And combined with the recent plunge in REIT stock prices created financing problems and led the developer to shelve the project. Summerfield Hotel Corp. was sold in June to a Dallas-based REIT. Tudor Wharf is the first Boston-area hotel project to be cancelled in part due to shifts in the economy.

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

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The Boston Informer is available by mail only. \$20.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-3584, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: 103477.556@compuserve.com.



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Signs of Recession are Near

You were asking...

- Q. The CA/T project claims that gridlock on the Central Artery will be eliminated by 2010, because at present, 190,000 vehicles per day use the current six lanes, and in 2010, about 245,000 vehicles per day will use the eight-lane depressed artery. Is this true?
- A. Not exactly, because 190,000 vehicles on six lanes is roughly 31,600 vehicles per lane per day, and 245,000 vehicles on eight lanes is about 30,600 vehicles per lane per day, an improvement of only 3 percent.
- Q. Why does Frank McCourt's land near the World Trade Center have a huge billboard with "The Evelyn Moakely Bridge—Gateway to Boston" and a picture of Rep. Joe Moakley's late wife? I know Moakley is adamant about demolishing the historic Old Northern Avenue Bridge which connects to the new courthouse and proposed Fan Pier development, a block from McCourt's land....
- A. Your guess is as good as ours.
- Q. I thought you said the city strongly requested that the developer of that Trinity Place development behind the main library include the street address, 25 Huntington Ave., with the anonymous "place" name. None of the ads, signs or promo material includes the street address!
- A. Must be waiting 'til it's built.
- Q. Why do you think the new Logan West Garage is so popular? Are more people traveling all of a sudden, or do you think maybe some people stopped taking transit and drive?
- A. Beats us. Since opening in September, the Logan West Garage has added an additional 3,150 parking spaces to the supply. This new supply may have attracted people away from transit and park-and-fly.

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